lineages which is more marked as the Fang become unattached conquerors. In the same way frequent examples have been given of extensive agglomerations being broken up after the death of the "chief" who had founded and maintained them. The size and cohesion of the groupings appear therefore in a large measure to depend on the personality of the leaders who have asserted themselves (for any rightful succession may be contested under pretext of incapacity, or it may be refused) and on circumstances. This explains in part the frequency of fissions observed by various authors at the level of the third or fourth generation. (1) The size

1. Particularly, E. Trezenem, "Notes ethnographiques sur les tribus Fan du Moyen-Ogooué [Ethnographic Notes on the Fang Tribes of the Middle Ogooué]," op. cit.

of localised groupings may therefore vary a great deal -- especially since the pacification of the country -- going from the major lineage expressed in "clan patches" to the minor lineage (nd'ê bôt) forming an isolated hamlet.

Kinship

Our analysis of Fang society has so far considered groupings only in terms of two fundamental elements: paternal filiation and real fraternity. We must now examine the bonds created and the relations prescribed by other modalities of kinship, as well as by the alliances that may exist between "foreign" groupings as a result of marriages.

Through the medium of his father (ésa, whom he calls tâga) and of his mother (nya, whom he calls nanô), the individual belongs to two kinship groupings, the paternal (ésinyâg) and the maternal (dzânanô). For the young Fang these two have neither the same significance nor the same importance. [114] The course of his life will generally be spent in the midst of the first group, while he has only incidental relations with the "relatives." of the second group. It is from the first that he receives his clan affiliation. The fundamental relations of paternal kinship are governed,

612 as we have maintained, in terms of filiation – the term émò,
601 with a qualifying word indicating the filiation: thus émò wam, my son – and in terms of "fraternity," the term mwanò indicating the descendants found in the same segment. From these two co-ordinates, some of the relationships can be represented as follows:

Table VI

Generations	Designations in the vertical direction	Designations in the horizontal direction
X	Mvam (sg)	
I	Mvam (sg)	
II	Esa (sg)	
III	Mwanò (sg)	Bobémâg (pl)
IV	Bêndê (pl)	Bobémâg (pl)
V	Nwabâg (col)	Bobézâg (pl)
Y	Nwagbâg (col)	Mwan'ayôg (sg)

Abbreviations: sg, singular; pl, plural; col, collective.

In the first place it seems that the word mvam, used specifically for the grandfather and the forefather, has a very general meaning. It is applied to the great-uncle and to both the ancestor of the direct line of descent and those of the collateral lines. According to Trilles mvam "is derived from a root va, which implies not the idea of a generation, which is sa or ba, 'to plant,' but of production, increase, growth... ." (1) The mvam, living or dead

1. Father H. Trilles, op. cit., p. 88.

who may be at the same time ancestors and guardian beings, constitute in an indistinct way the ngibâg, or ancestry. This voluntary
652 confusion of terminology, being a sort of throwback into the past
601 in the defunct part of the clan grouping, should be connected with
888 the Fang custom of keeping the old men away from public life and reducing them to a sort of marginal life. (2) In the same way,

2. Ibid., p. 106, "The white-haired old

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[985]

> man is rarely esteemed in the Fang country. As soon as he no longer has the strength to carry a gun, he receives no consideration, and of his own accord he adapts himself to this role, joking and playing at every turn."

the fourth generation assures [115] the passage into the midst of the confused grouping called nwabâg, which, while specifically designating the great-grandchildren, also signifies progeny, the whole of the descendants related in an unspecified way, who are to one another mwanêâg (plural, bobêâg), a term that could be translated as "brother of the same lineage" or simply as "relative." This passage which occurs at the first and fourth generations indicates the privileged position given to two intermediary generations, that of the ésa (father) and that of the mwanô (son). In the case of this conquering people who rated their villages only by the number of its warriors, this fact must be linked to the importance given socially to the "man in his full strength" nyamôrô (1), — and

> 1. Ibid., p. 106, "Mur means 'personality' and the particle nya indicates the idea of plenitude or superiority. Our French word 'maître' [master] corresponds fairly well to this meaning."

to "the man who has become adult" — ékwar. On these two generations is based the framework of traditional Fang society.

On the other hand, the strong fraternity expressed by the notion of mwanênâg (2) survives only to the third generation with

> 2. Father Trilles writes that this term "indicates real kinship or filiation and not by adoption or blood brotherhood ...," op. cit., p. 251.

respect to a common mvam (grandfather). (3) The order of

3: Balandier--53 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 FH19 Fang FH19

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3. An expression frequently heard during our investigations was: "They had the same mvam, therefore they belonged to the same nd'ê bôt."

succession confirms this fact by retaining in the collateral lines of descent only "first cousins" and paternal nephews (ómò mwanémâg, son of mwanémâg) of the deceased. (4) Apart from the individual

4. Cf. M. Bertaut, Le Droit coutumier des Boulous [Common Law of the Boulou], chapter, "Successions," and L. Mba, Essai de droit coutumier pahouin [Essay on Pahouin Common Law], p. 39.

family which has no independent existence, it is in relation to this kinship that the most coherent and restricted grouping of Fang society, the nd'ê bôt, is organized. This assures the cohesion of such a grouping but also contributes, in quite the opposite direction, with the relaxing of effective kinship, to the cleavages which occur frequently in the fourth generation.

612 601 561 Important distinctions should be marked on the same horizontal segment. First of all in terms of sex, between brother (ndum) and sister (kal). These two terms have a very broad meaning, since, according to L. Martrou, they may mean by extension "village brother" and "daughter [or girl] of the same village." (5)

5. L. Martrou, Lexique [Lexicon].

In terms of birth, children born of the same mother (of the same womb, abum avôri) form a distinct group called abumò bôt. No privilege however is [116] granted the siblings, this qualification most frequently being specified only by a periphrase, mwanémâg abum avôri, "brother from the same womb." Above all, in terms of seniority, the eldest, ntôl or nyamôrò, takes precedence over the younger brother, ndzimò. This pre-eminence is fundamental and is of the same order as that which subordinates the generation

5: Balandier--54 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 FH9 Fang FH9

612 of mwanô to that of the ésa. The eldest son is not only almost
601 the exclusive heir to property -- "he inherits at least seven tenths,"
561 writes Mr. Bertaut -- but he also has religious privileges. He is the sole guardian of the skulls of ancestors, and he has political privileges, if he shows himself sufficiently able.

601 Within the maternal kinship the most important relations are
608 those between nephew (mwanô kal) and maternal uncle (nya-nduma). Of this we have proof in an early study of the Fang of the N'Djolé region, and in a recent document written at the time of a clan gathering which shows the maintenance of some of these relations. Captain Cursult (1) refers to them in a precise manner in his

1. Captain Cursult, "Monographie du secteur de N'Djolé au Gabon" [Monograph on the N'Djolé Sector in Gabon], Revue des Troupes Coloniales, 68, February, 1908.

monograph on the N'Djolé sector: "The relations between uncle and nephew are very close; during his life the nephew gives his uncle a great many presents to increase still further the price paid to his uncle for his mother. In the same way, whenever his nephew pays him a visit, the uncle kills a chicken for him, etc... as does the father-in-law for his son-in-law. ... If a poor nephew needs goods to pay for a palaver or to get married, he can go to his uncle, sure that he will receive help from him, even if he has not often given him presents. It is a supreme shame for a man to send away the son of his sister with empty hands." Maternal
428 uncle and nephew have a share in the inheritance. An official report of the clan gathering of the Yémisèm-Éba still provides in 1948 for the "indemnity" due at the time of the death of a nya-nduma (a sum corresponding to the value of a woman and a sheep) and on the death of a mwanô-kal (a slightly smaller sum, "varying according to the size of the inheritance," and a sheep). (2)

2. Réunion de 25 villages de la tribu Yémissem a Afénane (District d'Oyem) du 12 an 19 Juillet, 1948 [Gathering of 25 villages of the Yémissem tribe at

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Afâmane (Oyem District) from July 12-19, 1948]. Archives d'Oyem.

The relation between the mwanõ-kal and the nya-nduma is about the same as that between son-in-law and father-in-law.

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Such an assembly of facts is understandable only in terms of the Fang principle regulating the circulation of bride prices. "The brother marries with his sister's bride price," nduma a luk nõ biki kal. Within such a circuit, the establishment of a couple concerns not only [117] the two partners but also the sister of the husband who has indirectly "provided" the bride price making the marriage possible, and the brother of the wife who has indirectly "recovered" this same bride price in order to get married. This explains the bonds existing between the maternal [sic] nephew and

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uncle and also the rights which the paternal aunt (sõna) has, according to Cureau, "over her brother's children, since it is thanks to the price of her sale that her brother was able to get married and consequently have children." In exceptional circumstances

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this relationship is sufficiently active to allow the nephew to settle in the midst of the family grouping of the maternal uncle or of the husband of the paternal aunt. We have had occasion to observe the first case, which involved a change of clan affiliation. A man of Yêngwi birth left his grouping following a death of which he was suspected; having joined his maternal uncle with whom he settled down to live, where he was considered as an

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Esabõg (he was said to be ñ̃a ayõg, entered into the clan).

The kinship terms in the Fang system are applied not only to a specific class of individuals but are often used in an extended manner. Ngwé may designate any maternal relative. Nya-nduma (literally, the mother's brother) is applied to certain maternal male relatives: maternal grandfather and his brothers, maternal uncles and their descendants (1), in fact, to all the men belonging

1. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., pp. 32 and 41.

to the nd'ê bot of the maternal grandfather. Mwanõ-kal implies

601 kinship with descent through the women, i.e., through paternal aunts (the term sɔ̀na having a descriptive equivalent, kal ésuɔ̀, father's sister), maternal aunts (to whom is applied symmetrically the term sɔ̀na), and sisters (kal). But its meaning can be broadened to include, as Martrou states, "any child whose mother is a native of the village or the tribe." When the emphasis is on the closest kinship, in each class the term is used with the word fɔ̀ɔ̀, which means "true" and which has a quality of accentuation. Thus mwanə̂ŋ fɔ̀ɔ̀ would be translated "brother by the same father." While the mwanə̂ŋ group refers essentially to paternal filiation, the mvanə̂kal group points to descent through sisters, and the system of distribution of bride prices. They have in a way a complementary existence and are associated with the mechanism which allows the establishment of the couple and the procreation of posterity. The one [latter] may remedy the decay of the other [former]. Cursult [118] points this out by using a case already quoted: "An orphan who does not get on with his father's brothers seeks a "brother" in his maternal uncle or in the husband of his paternal aunt, or in the son of his sister, if the latter is much older than he and already the mother of full-grown men." There is therefore a recourse to be had for anyone who, as an exception, wants to escape from the authority unjustly employed by the "chief" of his nd'ə̀ bɔ̀t.

612 This account of the principal aspects of kinship shows fairly well that, while granting first place to the "paternals," Fang society also acknowledges the "maternals" by attributing important roles to them. (1) This double recognition is confirmed by the

1. M. H. Kingsley had already stressed this important fact. Cf. Travels in West Africa, London, 1897, in which she writes: "Among the Fang, kinship is recognized both on the side of the father and of the mother, and is not limited as among the Galwa by immediate sanguinity."

obligation of double exogamy. It is forbidden to marry a woman

532 The first principle regulating kinship is that of double exogamy, in the paternal line, but also in the maternal line. Marriage is not allowed within one's own clan, nor within the clan of one's mother. Incest within the maternal clan is scarcely less serious than incest within the paternal clan, but the interdiction in this line is not definitive and hereditary. At the present time the prohibition seems to die out after two generations: a great-grandson may take a wife from the clans of his maternal great-grandmothers, and even a grandson from that of his maternal grandmother. It is another matter in the paternal line, whose genealogy children learn by heart. However, on account of the present state of forgetfulness, I do not know the exact rules.

601 A second characteristic of kinship is that it is classificatory and that the nomenclature is modified as to person, sometimes as to gender, in accordance with the subject of the relationship. Thus "father" or "mother," for instance, are called:

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
tate	ɓo	ɓa
name	nyua	nyia

according to whether there is involved a relative of the speaker, of the person spoken to, or of the person spoken about.

For "brother" and "sister" the terms furthermore vary according to the sex of the subject of the relationship:

monyaⁿ (a contraction of moneyaⁿ (1) • mother's son) • brother of a man or sister of a woman of the clan; while

1. Third person: — nyaⁿ, from nyia, "mother;" 1st person, mɔjaⁿ: — jaⁿ, the same word as jaⁿ • jal, "mother's native hamlet."

the sister of a man = kal,

the brother of a woman = ndôm.

A man's son is ndôman, his daughter is ngon; a woman's /son and daughter/ are simply bon (sing. mon), "the little ones."

601 The generic /terms/ of kinship are formed from these words, for
602 instance:

ndômenyañ (3rd person) = mother's brother, designating the maternal uncle and all his bobenyañ (clan or consanguineal brothers); this is a respect relationship;

motate, a contraction of mone tate = son of my father, designating half brothers on the father's side, with an idea of respect;

monekal = sister's son, designating nephews and uterine cousins with whom marriage is forbidden, although they belong to a different ayoñ; this is a joking relationship; the same term is applied to brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law;

monengon = daughter's son, designating uterine relatives within the clan and particularly sisters' illegitimate children, who are members of the clan but with a certain capitis diminutio, loss of status;

and so forth, relationship always being reckoned by clan, generation, and sex. This is borne out by the way ethnic constructions are formed: a Boulou, a /51/ Yenjôk, are mone bulu, mone yenjôk, a "child of Boulou," a "child of Yenjôk"; a Boulou woman is ngone bulu, a "daughter of Boulou"; two bo'be yenjôk would therefore be brothers, bobenyañ. What is curious is that this term, the most frequently employed for full brother or half brother on the father's side, clearly refers to a uterine relationship, since it means, literally, "mother's son."

Kinship in relation to order of generations (ndaé = grandchild; éndil = great-grandchild) entered into the choice of a name (éyôlé), /a practice that is/ not well understood at present. Even at the present, similarity of biyôlé creates a sort of quasi relationship between the homonyms mimbôm (sing. mbôm) or bemôé (sing. môé), with the obligation of reciprocal help.

Parents-in-law are betyi (possibly related to étyi = prohibition?); we shall mention this again in connection with marriage, but it may be pointed out here that the term is applied equally to the first wife considered with respect to her co-wives.

e. Marriage, Descent

The primary rule of marriage remains the prohibition against incest, the clan exogamy already mentioned. To take a wife from one's own or one's mother's clan is forbidden, also to marry the daughters of lineage sisters to quite a distant degree, even though

the two opposite angles and would represent the axis of migration, mfa'a mañ, "toward the sea." The masculine direction seems to have been the place of origin of the ye (feminine?) clans, the feminine direction, that of the ésa clans. Trilles places with the latter the ébi clans, which are, geographically, from eastern clans; I wonder if they ought not rather to be connected with the ye clans since ébi means "hole," "chasm" (yee = valley, ravine). In the bilaba, masculine commodities come from the female sector, and vice versa.

These apparent contradictions would be resolved by applying the principle of double symmetry, or of sexual complementarity, similar to that which makes paternal, nonuterine half brothers called bobenyañ, "my mother's sons." This principle might be expressed somewhat as follows: every being capable of life must, in order to exist and be complete, include the opposite sex. In other words, bisexuality, a universal vital principle, should be found in every part of the universe /creation/. Stoll finds proof of this in the language, where the tone levels in his view constitute genuine differentiation by grammatical sex genders, and especially in the rites whose purpose appears to be not to make men entirely masculine or women entirely feminine, but rather to give to each sex the necessary complement of the opposite sex.

Whatever may be thought of this theory, it is a fact that, because of the apparent or real absence of grammatical sex gender in the language, the majority of the early writers, even Trilles, did not attach enough importance to real gender, to the sex actually attributed to objects, particularly to magical and ritual materials. We know that spear, akoñ, saber, fa, and probably the large drum, mbaé, are male; calabashes and cooking pots, rattles (mengoñ), the double bell (nkeñ) are female; the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous; horns for medicaments, minlak, are male at the pointed end, female at the hollow end, and the same with the rifle. As to numbers, my conclusions are diametrically opposed to those of Stoll, who believes even numbers to be male, and odd, female, though admittedly he advances as proof the large part played by odd numbers in feminine rites, which runs directly counter to his theory of double symmetry.

The numerical system is in any event only imperfectly known. Counting is based on 10, with traces of an 8:10, (awôm), basis /116/ and of 8, mwom, /having/ perhaps the same root as different classifiers. The so number is 9. Nyin, 4, seems related to a YI